

- 20 -

CLAIMS

1. A method for forming a polymeric coating on a substrate surface, which method comprises the steps of
 - i. activating at least one polymerisable organic acid or acid anhydride monomer comprising one or more acid and/or acid anhydride groups and at least one polymerisable group and/or at least one polymerisable organic base monomer comprising one or more basic groups and at least one polymerisable group by subjecting said monomers to a soft ionisation plasma process; and
 - ii. depositing the activated monomers resulting from step (i) onto the substrate surface thereby forming a polymeric coating containing salts resulting from interaction between acidic and basic functional groups on side chains of the polymeric coating.
2. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the soft ionisation plasma process is low pressure pulsed plasma.
3. A method in accordance with claim 2 wherein the pulse on-time is from 10 to 1000 μ s, and pulse off-time is from 1000 to 10000 μ s.
4. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the soft ionisation plasma process is an atmospheric pressure glow discharge.
5. A method in accordance with any preceding claim wherein the polymerisable organic acid monomer is a polymerisable carboxylic acid.
6. A method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the polymerisable carboxylic acid is one or more of acrylic acid, alkylacrylic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, citraconic acid, cinnamic acid, itaconic acid, sorbic acid and mesaconic acid.